



ASIA-PACIFIC

MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY

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THE ASIA-PACIFIC MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY: ACHIEVING U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY OBJECTIVES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

In accordance with Section 1259 of the Carl Levin and Howard P. “Buck” McKeon National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, Public Law 113-291, this report outlines the Department of Defense’s strategy with regard to maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region. Recognizing the importance of the Asia-Pacific region and its maritime domain for the security of the United States, the Department is focused on safeguarding freedom of the seas, deterring conflict and coercion, and promoting adherence to international law and standards. As it does around the world, the Department will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows, in support of these goals and in order to preserve the peace and security the Asia-Pacific region has enjoyed for the past 70 years.

Recognizing the growing complexity of the Asia-Pacific maritime domain, this report outlines four lines of effort the Department is employing in order to preserve security in this vital region. First, we are strengthening our military capacity to ensure the United States can successfully deter conflict and coercion and respond decisively when needed. Second, we are working together with our allies and partners from Northeast Asia to the Indian Ocean to build their capacity to address potential challenges in their waters and across the region. Third, we are leveraging military diplomacy to build greater transparency, reduce the risk of miscalculation or conflict, and promote shared maritime rules of the road. Finally, we are working to strengthen regional security institutions and encourage the development of an open and effective regional security architecture. Together with our inter-agency colleagues and regional allies and partners, the Department is focused on ensuring that maritime Asia remains open, free, and secure in the decades ahead.

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INTRODUCTION



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The United States has enduring economic and security interests in the Asia-Pacific region. And because the region – stretching from the Indian Ocean, through the South and East China Seas, and out to the Pacific Ocean – is primarily water, we place a premium on maintaining maritime peace and security.

To that end, the Department of Defense has three maritime objectives in the Asia-Pacific region: to safeguard the freedom of the seas; deter conflict and coercion; and promote adherence to international law and standards.

Why We Safeguard the Freedom of the Seas

The United States has, throughout its history, advocated for the freedom of the seas for economic and security reasons.

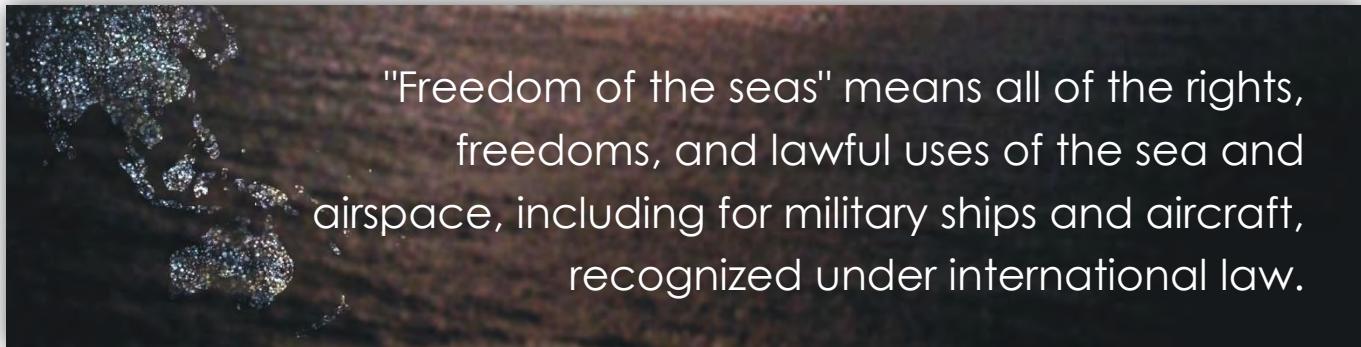
Maritime Asia is a vital thruway for global commerce, and it will be a critical part of the region's expected economic growth. The United States wants to ensure the Asia-Pacific region's continued economic progress. The importance of Asia-Pacific sea lanes for global trade cannot be overstated. Eight of the world's 10 busiest container ports are in the Asia-Pacific region, and almost 30 percent of the world's maritime trade transits the South China Sea annually, including approximately \$1.2 trillion in ship-borne trade bound for the United States.¹ Approximately two-thirds of the world's oil shipments transit through the Indian Ocean to the Pacific, and in 2014, more than 15 million barrels of oil passed through the Malacca Strait per day.

¹ U.S. Energy Information Administration.



The Department of Defense has three maritime objectives in the Asia-Pacific region: to safeguard the freedom of the seas; deter conflict and coercion; and promote adherence to international law and standards.

Freedom of the seas, however, includes more than the mere freedom of commercial vessels to transit through international waterways. While not a defined term under international law, the Department uses “freedom of the seas” to mean all of the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace, including for military ships and aircraft, recognized under international law. Freedom of the seas is thus also essential to ensure access in the event of a crisis. Conflicts and disasters can threaten U.S. interests and those of our regional allies and partners. The Department of Defense is therefore committed to ensuring free and open maritime access to protect the stable economic order that has served all Asia-Pacific nations so well for so long, and to maintain the ability of U.S. forces to respond as needed.



Why We Deter Conflict and Coercion

For 70 years, U.S. military presence in the Asia-Pacific region has played a vital role in undergirding regional peace, stability, and security. This presence has enabled tremendous prosperity and economic growth across the region and facilitated the unimpeded flow of resources and trade across vital Asian waterways. It is in the interests of all nations, not only those in the Asia-Pacific region, that the United States continues to deter and prevent conflict in this critical region.

As the maritime security environment continues to evolve, this task is becoming more challenging. But there should be no doubt that the United States will maintain the necessary military presence and capabilities to protect our interests and those of our allies and partners against potential threats in the maritime domain.

Why We Promote Adherence to International Law and Standards

Adherence to a rules-based system has been critical to furthering peace, stability, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. This system provides the basis for shared use of maritime waterways and resources, and ensures safe operations within the maritime domain. This is why the United States operates consistent with – even though the U.S. Senate has yet to provide its advice and consent – the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (Law of the Sea Convention), which reflects customary international law with respect to traditional uses of the ocean.

The Department of Defense, in conjunction with interagency partners, regional institutions, and regional allies and partners, is working to ensure that the rule of law – not coercion and force – dictate maritime Asia’s future.



For decades, the Asia-Pacific region has remained free from major conflicts, allowing nations to continue enjoying the benefits of the maritime domain.



STRATEGIC CONTEXT



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For decades, the Asia-Pacific region has remained free from major conflicts, allowing nations to continue enjoying the benefits of the maritime domain. However, the security environment is changing, potentially challenging the continued stability of the region. Rapid economic and military modernization, combined with growing resource demands, has exacerbated the potential for conflict over long-standing territorial disputes. In addition, non-traditional threats such as weapons proliferation, human and other illicit trafficking, piracy, and natural disasters continue to pose significant security challenges. On the other hand, we have seen a number of positive trends in recent years as well, including the peaceful resolution of some maritime disputes in the region.

[1] Competing Territorial and Maritime Claims

There are numerous, complex maritime and territorial disputes in the Asia-Pacific region. The presence of valuable fish stocks and potential existence of large hydrocarbon resources under the East and South China Seas exacerbate these complicated claims. A United Nations report estimates that the South China Sea alone accounts for more than 10 percent of global fisheries production. Though figures vary substantially, the Energy Information Administration estimates that there are approximately 11 billion barrels and 190 trillion cubic feet of proved and probable oil and natural gas reserves in the South China Sea and anywhere from one to two trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves, and 200 million barrels of oil in the East China Sea. Claimants regularly clash over fishing rights, and earlier attempts at joint development agreements have faltered in recent years.

U.S. allies and partners are seeking U.S. leadership and engagement in maritime Asia.



The United States has a strong interest in ensuring all claimants seek to address and resolve their competing sovereignty claims peacefully, without conflict or coercion.

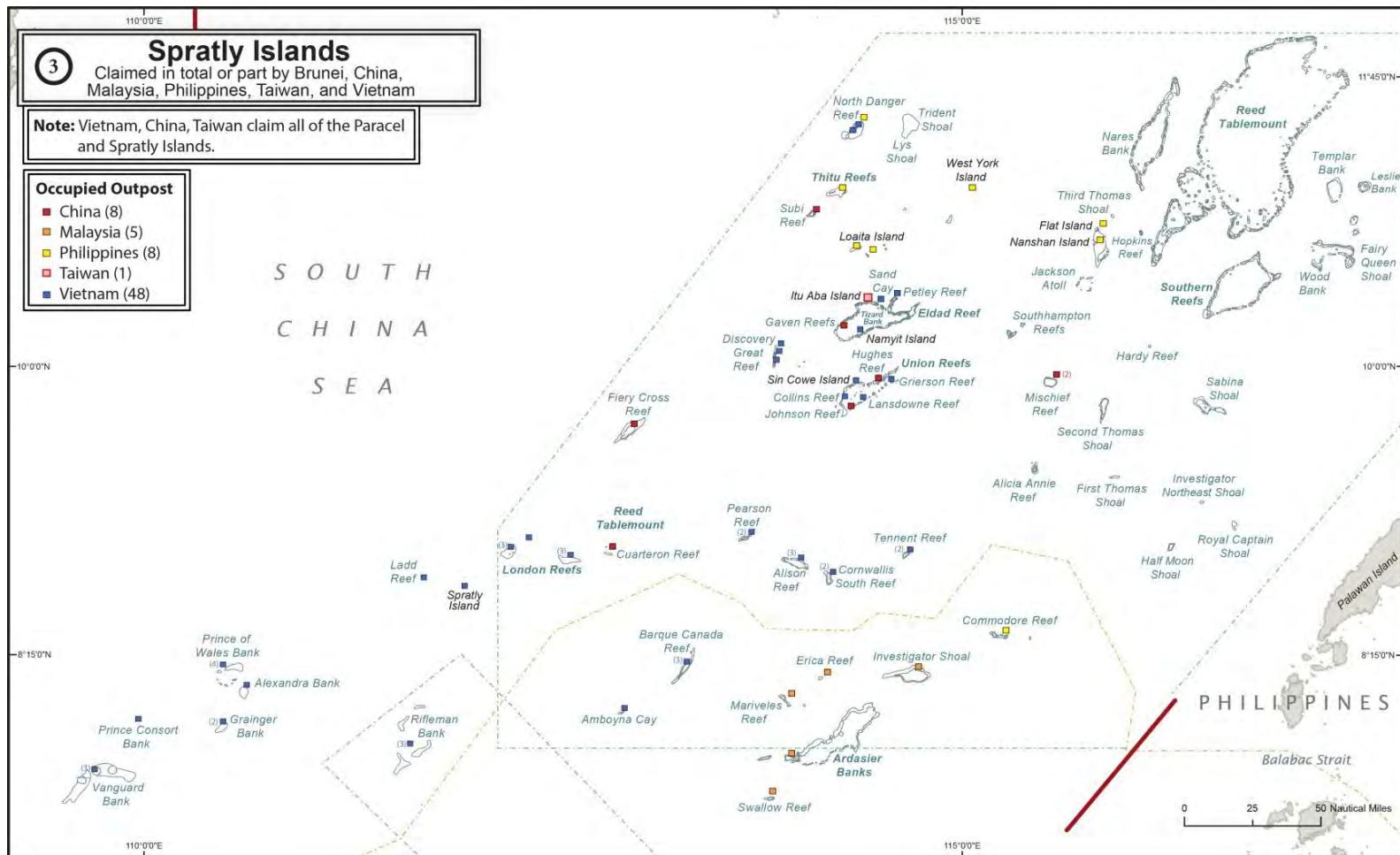
Although the United States takes no position on competing sovereignty claims to land features in the region, all such claims must be based upon land (which in the case of islands means naturally formed areas of land that are above water at high tide), and all maritime claims must derive from such land in accordance with international law, as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention. The United States has a strong interest in ensuring all claimants seek to address and resolve their issues peacefully, without conflict or coercion. We also encourage and support the efforts of claimant States to pursue diplomatic and other peaceful efforts to resolve the issues of sovereignty.

In the East China Sea, we continue to acknowledge Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands and oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine it. In the South China Sea, we urge all parties to pursue peaceful means of resolving their disputes, which includes diplomacy as well as third party dispute settlement, such as the Philippines' submission of its claims for arbitration in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures in the Law of the Sea Convention. We also urge all parties to take action to implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC) and take steps towards early conclusion of a meaningful Code of Conduct (CoC), which would provide agreed upon rules of the road to reduce tension among claimant States.

South China Sea

South China Sea territorial and maritime disputes revolve around three primary issues: (1) competing territorial claims among claimants, (2) competing maritime claims among claimants, and (3) excessive maritime claims asserted by some of the claimants. Regarding competing territorial claims, there are six claimants to the land features in the South China Sea: Brunei, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

There are three primary disputes over territorial sovereignty. The first is a dispute among China, Taiwan, and Vietnam over the sovereignty of the Paracel Islands, which China has occupied since 1974. The second is a China-Taiwan-Philippines contest over Scarborough Reef. The third is a multi-claimant dispute over the Spratly Islands, which includes more than 200 geographic features. China, Taiwan, and Vietnam claim sovereignty over all of the Spratly land features, while Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines claim sovereignty of only certain land features in the island group. Vietnam and Malaysia have yet to delimit fully their maritime claims in the South China Sea.



Regarding competing maritime claims, claimants assert a combination of sovereignty, resource-related sovereign rights, and jurisdictional claims to the maritime areas located within the South China Sea. Some of these claimants have clarified the nature and breadth of their maritime claims, but others have not. For example, although Indonesia's claimed Exclusive Economic Zone extends into the South China Sea, the Indonesian government does not currently recognize China's so-called "Nine-Dash Line" (which overlaps with that EEZ) and so does not consider itself a claimant in any South China Sea-related maritime dispute.

Regarding excessive maritime claims, several claimants within the region have asserted maritime claims along their coastlines and around land features that are inconsistent with international law. For example, Malaysia attempts to restrict foreign military activities within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and Vietnam attempts to require notification by foreign warships prior to exercising the right of innocent passage through its territorial sea. A number of countries have drawn coastal baselines (the lines from which the breadth of maritime entitlements are measured) that are inconsistent with international law, including Vietnam and China, and the United States also has raised concerns with respect to Taiwan's Law on

The United States encourages all claimants to conform their maritime claims to international law.

the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone's provisions on baselines and innocent passage in the territorial sea. Although we applaud the Philippines' and Vietnam's efforts to bring its maritime claims in line with the Law of the Sea Convention, more work remains to be done. Consistent with the long-standing U.S. Freedom of Navigation Policy, the United States encourages all claimants to conform their maritime claims to international law and challenges excessive maritime claims through U.S. diplomatic protests and operational activities.

China has not clearly defined the scope of its maritime claims in the South China Sea. In May 2009, China communicated two Notes Verbales to the UN Secretary General stating objections to the submissions by Vietnam and Malaysia (jointly) and Vietnam (individually) to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf. The notes, among other things, included a map depicting nine line segments (dashes) encircling waters, islands and other features in the South China Sea and encompassing approximately two million square kilometers of maritime space. The 2009 Note Verbales also included China's assertion that it has "indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and the adjacent waters and enjoys sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the relevant waters as well as the seabed and subsoil thereof." China's actions and rhetoric have left unclear the precise nature of its maritime claim, including whether China claims all of the maritime area located within the line as well as all land features located therein.²

East China Sea

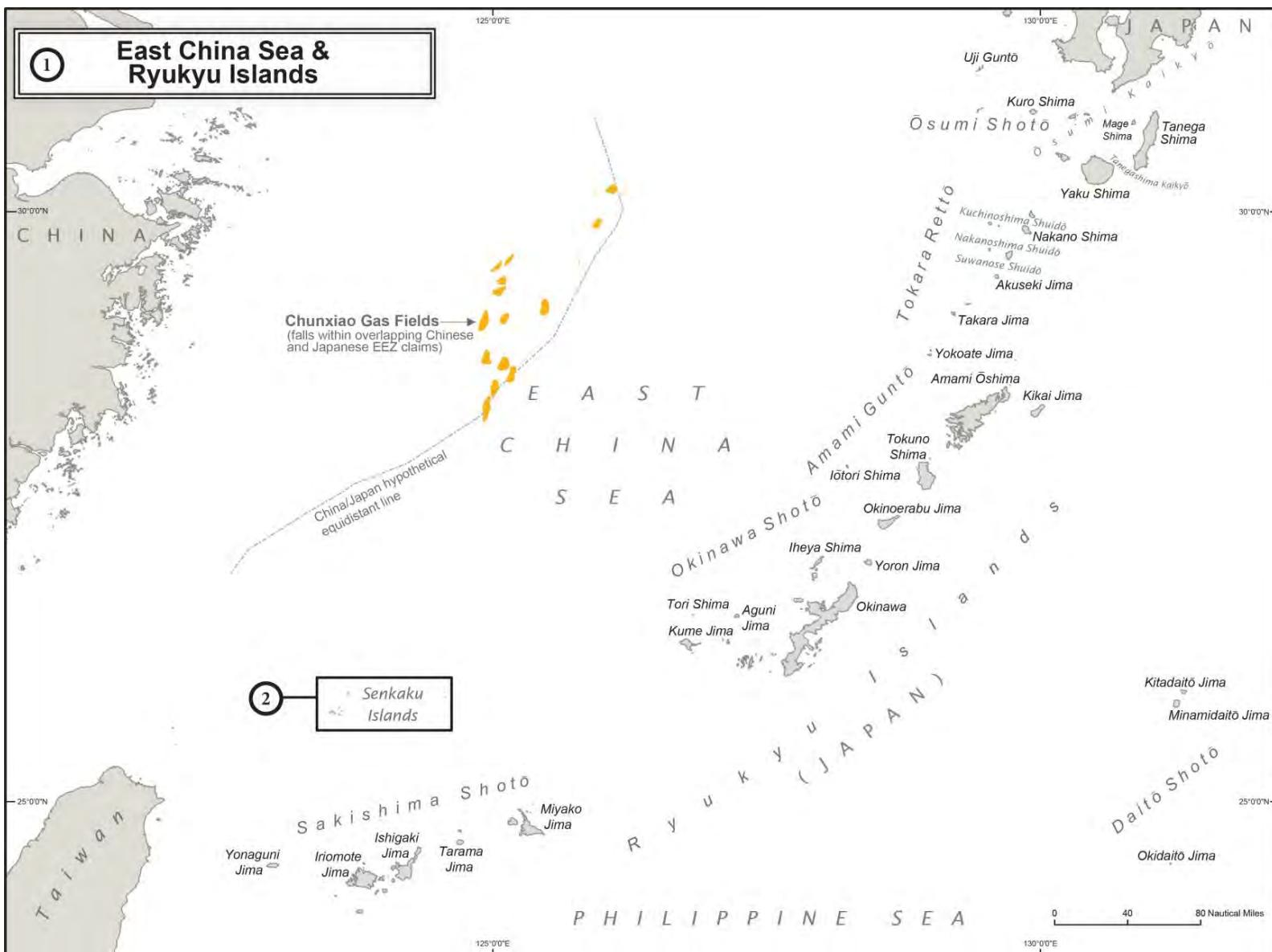
Since the 1972 reversion of Okinawa and other Ryukyu Islands from the United States, Japan has administered the Senkaku Islands. In April 2012, the Governor of Tokyo announced plans to purchase three of the five islets from private Japanese owners, prompting the Government of Japan to purchase the three islands in September 2012 in an attempt to prevent sparking a crisis. However, China interpreted the action as an attempt to change the status quo and protested the move, re-kindling tensions between the neighboring countries.

Regarding the delimitation of maritime boundaries in the East China Sea, China has voiced a claim to an extended continental shelf that extends beyond the midpoint between China and Japan (i.e., in an area more than 200 nautical miles from China but within 200 nautical miles of Japan). The unresolved maritime boundary continues to create tensions over access to fish and hydrocarbon resources in that area.

Through a persistent military and law enforcement presence and the announcement in November 2013 of a new Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea, which the United States does not recognize, China continues to engage in actions that appear designed to challenge Japan's administration of the Senkaku Islands. China has sent Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) ships (and less often, aircraft) on a regular basis to patrol near the Senkaku Islands, including within 12 nautical miles from the islands. Japan has responded, sending increased patrols by the Japan Coast Guard to support its administration of the islands.

As President Obama noted in Tokyo last year and reiterated earlier this year during Prime Minister Abe's visit, "our treaty commitment to Japan's security is absolute, and Article 5 covers all territories under Japan's administration, including the Senkaku Islands" – a point that Secretaries Carter and Kerry also reaffirmed with their Japanese counterparts on Monday, April 27, 2015, during the "2+2" meeting in New York. We will continue to oppose any unilateral action that seeks to undermine Japan's administration.

² On December 5, 2014, the State Department issued a study examining China's Maritime Claims in the South China Sea in its Series, Limits in the Seas No. 143.



Indian Ocean

In sharp contrast to the South and East China Seas, the Indian Ocean region has remained relatively free of tensions caused by territorial and maritime disputes in recent years. Although there are a few maritime disputes in the region, they are relatively stable or have been resolved through international tribunals and arbitration.

India has been involved in two maritime disputes with neighboring countries: Pakistan and Bangladesh. India's primary remaining maritime boundary dispute is with Pakistan, deriving from a disagreement about where the land boundary hits the coastline as New Delhi and Islamabad maintain differing claims over Sir Creek. Pakistan claims the entire creek with the boundary drawn along the eastern bank, while India believes that the boundary should be drawn at the mid-channel point, as demarcated in a 1925 map. Although the dispute is ongoing, tensions between the two countries have been much lower over the Sir Creek boundary and the undelimited maritime boundary than those over their other disputed land boundaries.

India and Bangladesh also had competing claims over a portion of the Bay of Bengal. However, in 2009, both nations agreed to submit their conflicting claims to international arbitration. The July 2014 arbitral ruling largely favored Dhaka's position, awarding Bangladesh sovereign rights to approximately 7,500 square miles, or about three-quarters, of the sea area of the Bay of Bengal, thereby giving Bangladesh rights to explore extensive oil and gas reserves that were previously held by India. Both India and Bangladesh publicly supported the arbitration. In a joint statement with Dhaka, New Delhi pledged to abide by the ruling, expressing satisfaction that the settlement of the maritime boundary would enhance mutual understanding and goodwill, bring closure to the maritime boundary issue, and pave the way for cooperation in sustainable exploitation of the maritime resources of the Bay of Bengal.

[2] Military and Maritime Law Enforcement (MLE) Modernization

Rapid military modernization across the Asia-Pacific region has significantly increased the potential for dangerous miscalculations or conflict in the maritime domain. Many countries are also significantly enhancing their maritime law enforcement (MLE) capabilities. These assets have become increasingly relevant as countries, particularly China, are using them to assert sovereignty over disputed areas.

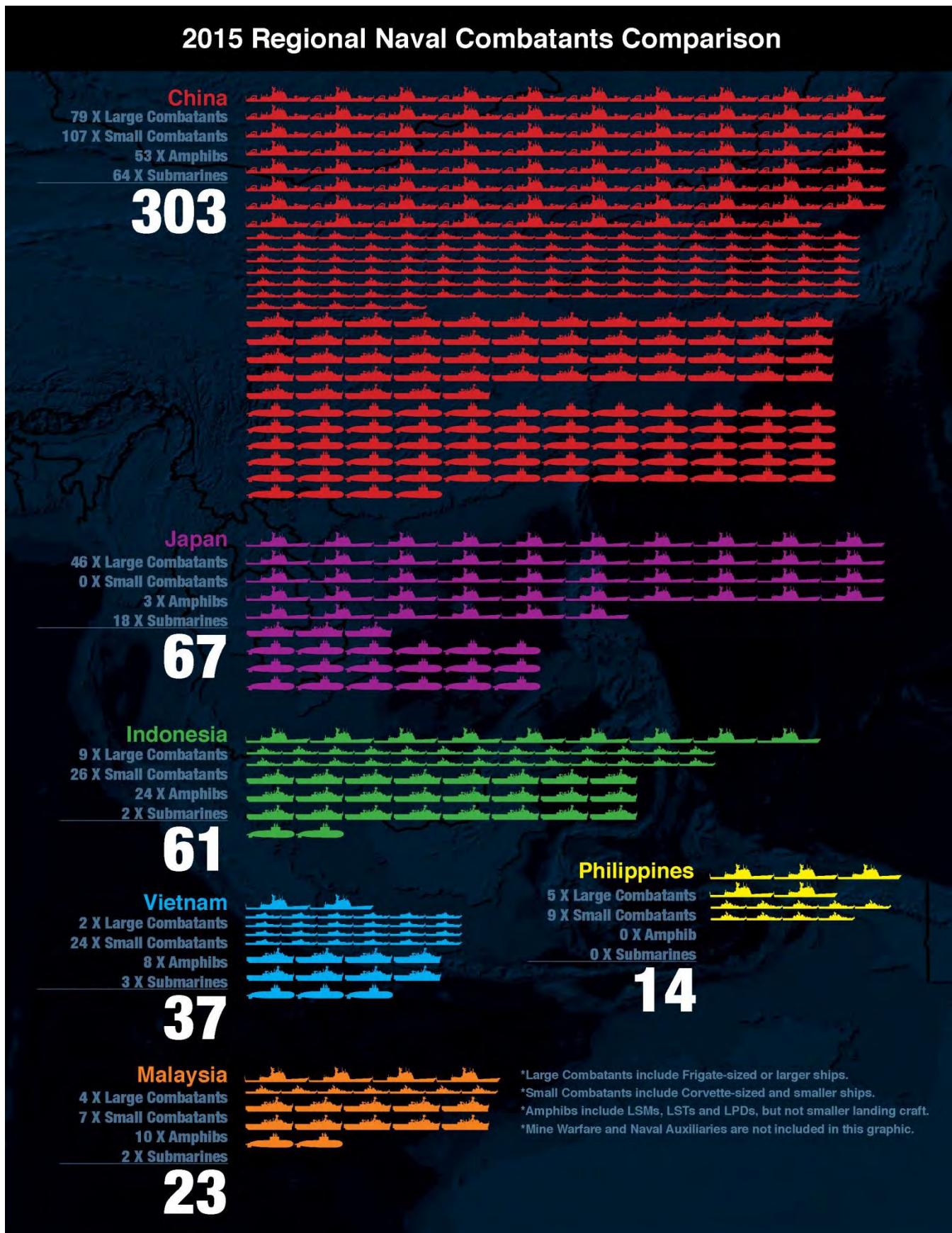


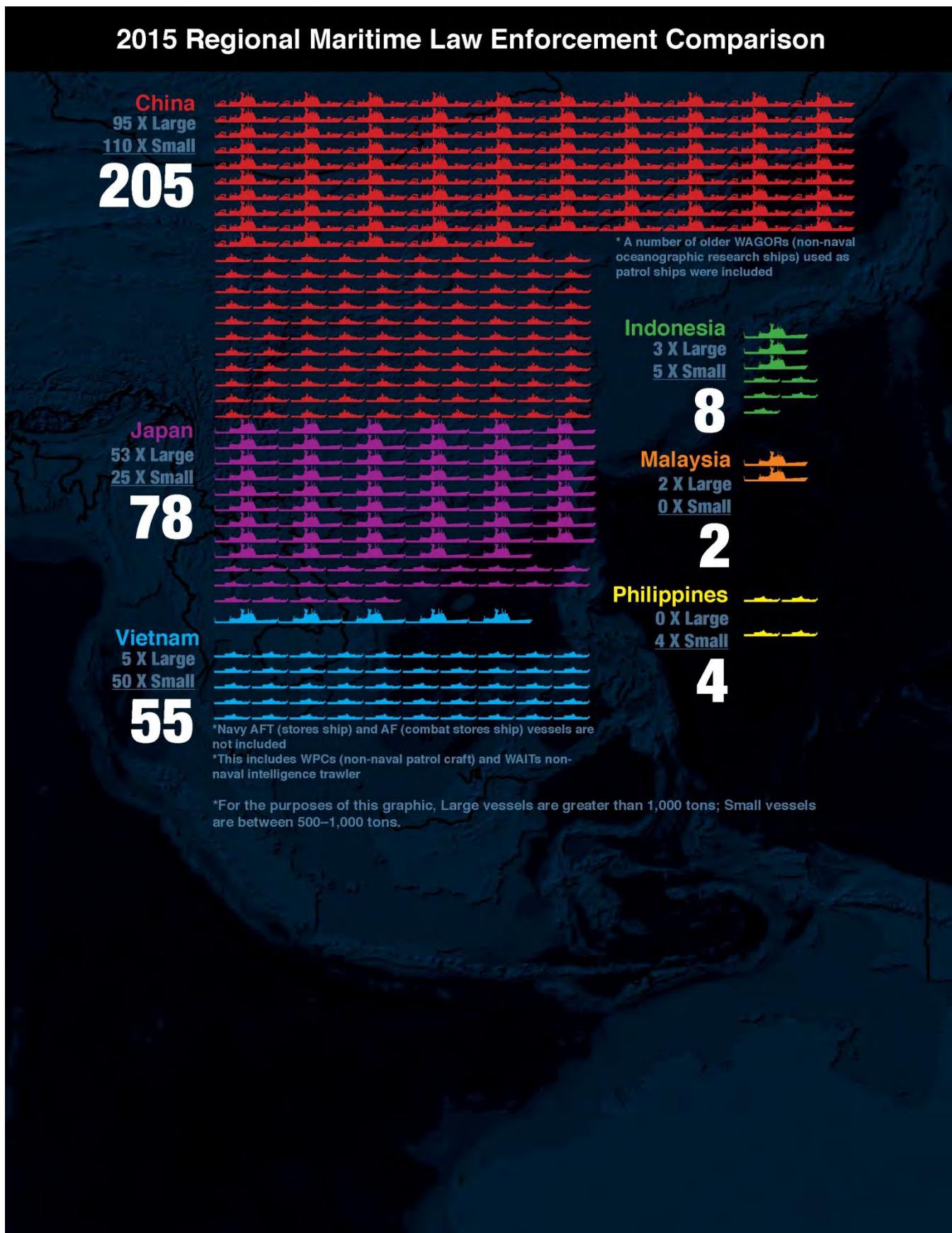
China is modernizing every aspect of its maritime-related military and law enforcement capabilities, including its naval surface fleet, submarines, aircraft, missiles, radar capabilities, and coast guard. It is developing high-end technologies intended to dissuade external intervention in a conflict and designed to counter U.S. military technology. Although preparation for a potential Taiwan conflict remains the primary driver of Chinese investment, China is also placing emphasis on preparing for contingencies in the East and South China Sea. China sees a need for the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) to be able to support China's "new historic missions" and operational tasks outside the first island chain with multi-mission, long-range, sustainable naval platforms equipped with robust self-defense capabilities. Although quantity is only one component of overall capability, from 2013 to 2014, China launched more naval vessels than any other country. The PLAN now possesses the largest number of vessels in Asia, with more than 300 surface ships, submarines, amphibious ships, and patrol craft.

China also is executing the largest MLE modernization effort in Asia, quantitatively and qualitatively improving its fleet, which is designed to enforce its maritime claims in the East and South China Seas. China's MLE fleet, composed primarily of vessels from the newly formed China Coast Guard, is likely to increase in size by 25 percent and is larger than that of all of the other claimants combined.

Other Asia-Pacific nations are also enhancing their maritime capabilities. Japan is improving Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) deterrent capabilities and realigning military and MLE assets to areas near the Senkaku Islands, which are also claimed by China. Japan plans to acquire and realign Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets to the area; upgrade maritime patrol craft and ground force radar, and missile units; and develop an amphibious assault capability within a joint JSDF task force. The Japanese cabinet has approved a modest increase to the Japan Coast Guard's budget, in part to fund a permanent Senkakus patrol unit.

In Southeast Asia, Vietnam is pursuing an ambitious maritime modernization program, highlighted by its ongoing acquisition of six Russian-built Kilo-class submarines, frigates and corvettes, and its potential procurement of long-range coastal defense cruise missiles. In 2014, Japan announced it would provide Vietnam six used coast guard surveillance vessels, and Hanoi is expanding the Vietnam Coast Guard's power to enforce maritime law. The Philippines is also modernizing its maritime forces—some of its ships date to World War II—including through its acquisition in 2011 and 2013 of two excess defense article U.S. Coast Guard cutters.





[3] Maritime Challenges

Although many claimants are using their military and maritime law enforcement capabilities in a responsible manner, recent provocative actions have heightened tensions in the region and raised concerns. Actions such as the use of MLE vessels to coerce rival claimants, unsafe air and maritime behavior, and land reclamation to expand disputed features and create artificial islands hamper efforts to manage and resolve territorial and maritime disputes peacefully.

Expanded Use of Non-Military Assets to Coerce Rivals

Several nations have expanded their use of non-military assets to advance their territorial and maritime claims in the East China Sea and South China Sea. Most notably, China is using a steady progression of small, incremental steps to increase its effective control over disputed areas and avoid escalation to military conflict.

In particular, China is increasingly deploying the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) to enforce its claims over features in the East and South China Seas. China prefers to use its government-controlled, maritime law enforcement ships in these disputes, and operates PLAN vessels over the horizon so they are ready to respond to escalation. China has demonstrated this model during disputes with rival claimants over Scarborough Reef, Second Thomas Shoal, the South Luconia Shoal, and CNOOC-981 drilling operations south of the Paracel Islands. Since 2012, the CCG has maintained a persistent presence in areas including around the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and Scarborough Reef in the South China Sea. Similarly, China has used MLE ships to restrict and put pressure on Philippine access to Second Thomas Shoal where the Philippines maintains presence via a

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grounded naval vessel, the *Sierra Madre*. Although China is not the only claimant to use non-military assets to conduct worrying or dangerous actions against rival claimants – for example, in 2013, members of the Philippines Coast Guard killed a Taiwan fisherman in waters claimed by both the Philippines and Taiwan – it has been, by far, the most active.

Unsafe Air and Maritime Maneuvers

The growing efforts of claimant States to assert their claims has led to an increase in air and maritime incidents in recent years, including an unprecedented rise in unsafe activity by China's maritime agencies in the East and South China Seas. U.S. military aircraft and vessels often have been targets of this unsafe and unprofessional behavior, which threatens the U.S. objectives of safeguarding the freedom of the seas and promoting adherence to international law and standards. China's expansive interpretation of jurisdictional authority beyond territorial seas and airspace causes friction with U.S. forces and treaty allies operating in international waters and airspace in the region and raises the risk of inadvertent crisis.

There have been a number of troubling incidents in recent years. For example, in August 2014, a Chinese J-11 fighter crossed directly under a U.S. P-8A Poseidon operating in the South China Sea approximately 117 nautical miles east of Hainan Island. The fighter also performed a barrel roll over the aircraft and passed the nose of the P-8A to show its weapons load-out, further increasing the potential for a collision. However, since August 2014, U.S.-China military diplomacy has yielded positive results, including a reduction in unsafe intercepts. We also have seen the PLAN

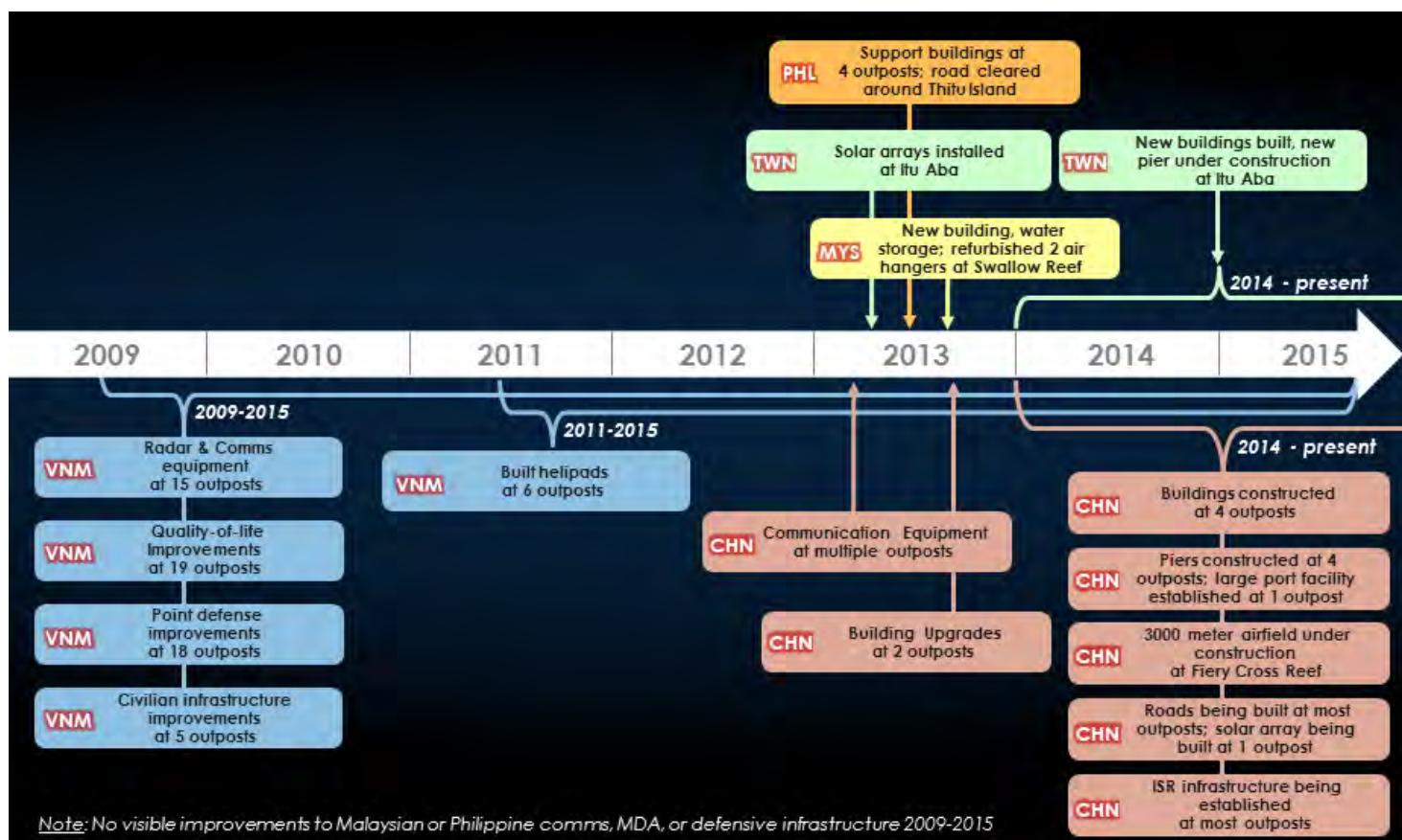
implement agreed-upon international standards for encounters at sea, such as the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES), which was signed in April 2014.

Land Reclamation on Disputed Features

One of the most notable recent developments in the South China Sea is China's expansion of disputed features and artificial island construction in the Spratly Islands, using large-scale land reclamation. Although land reclamation – the dredging of seafloor material for use as landfill – is not a new development in the South China Sea, China's recent land reclamation campaign significantly outweighs other efforts in size, pace, and nature.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Philippines and Malaysia conducted limited land reclamation projects on disputed features, with Vietnam and later Taiwan initiating efforts. At the time, the Philippines constructed an airfield on Thitu Island, with approximately 14 acres of land reclamation to extend the runway. Malaysia built an airfield at Swallow Reef in the 1980s, also using relatively small amounts of reclaimed land. Between 2009 and 2014, Vietnam was the most active claimant in terms of both outpost upgrades and land reclamation. It reclaimed approximately 60 acres of land at 7 of its outposts and built at least 4 new structures as part of its expansion efforts. Since August 2013, Taiwan has reclaimed approximately 8 acres of land near the airstrip on Itu Aba Island, its sole outpost.

Timeline of Infrastructure and Capability Improvements on Spratly Outposts

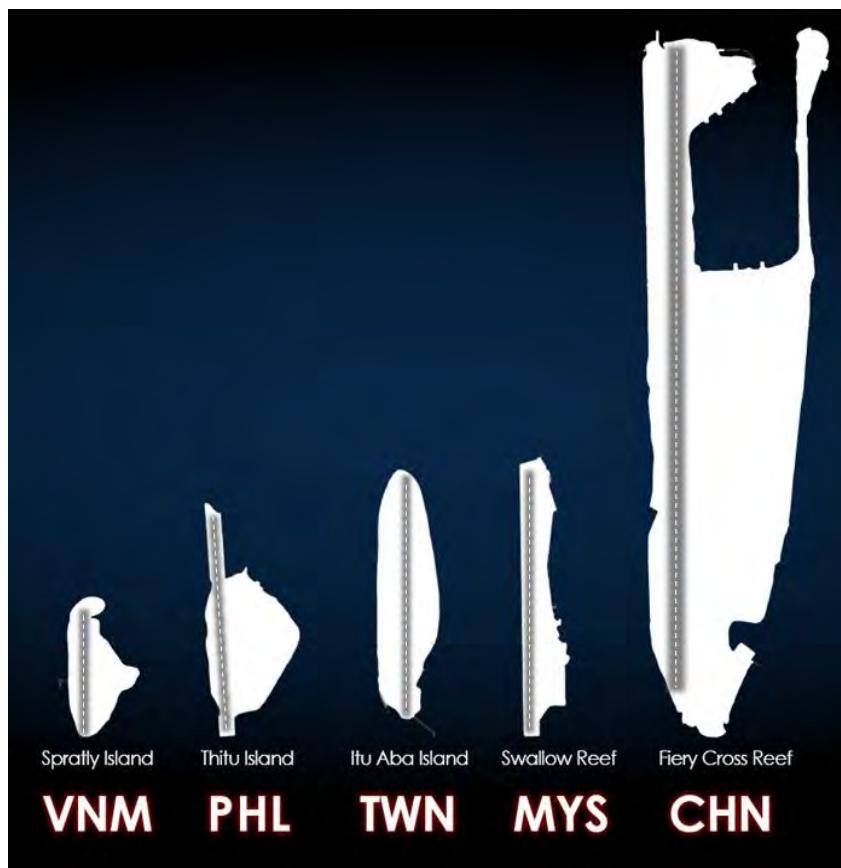


China's recent efforts involve land reclamation on various types of features within the South China Sea. At least some of these features were not naturally formed areas of land that were above water at high tide and, thus, under international law as reflected in the Law of the Sea Convention, cannot generate any maritime zones (e.g., territorial seas or exclusive economic zones). Artificial islands built on such features could, at most, generate 500-meter safety zones, which must be established in conformity with requirements specified in the Law of the Sea Convention. Although China's expedited land reclamation efforts in the Spratlys are occurring ahead of an anticipated ruling by the arbitral tribunal in the Philippines v. China arbitration under the Law of the Sea Convention, they would not be likely to bolster the maritime entitlements those features would enjoy under the Convention.

Since Chinese land reclamation efforts began in December 2013, China has reclaimed land at seven of its eight Spratly outposts and, as of June 2015, had reclaimed more than 2,900 acres of land. By comparison, Vietnam has reclaimed a total of approximately 80 acres; Malaysia, 70 acres; the Philippines, 14 acres; and Taiwan, 8 acres. China has now reclaimed 17 times more land in 20 months than the other claimants combined over the past 40 years, accounting for approximately 95 percent of all reclaimed land in the Spratly Islands.

All territorial claimants, except Brunei, maintain outposts in the South China Sea, which they use to establish presence in surrounding waters, assert their claims to sovereignty, and monitor the activities of rival claimants. All of these claimants have engaged in construction-related activities. Outpost upgrades vary widely but broadly are composed of land reclamation, building construction and extension, and defense emplacements.

Relative Size Comparison of Spratly Features With Airfields of Various Claimants



At all of its reclamation sites, China either has transitioned from land reclamation operations to infrastructure development, or has staged construction support for infrastructure development. As infrastructure development is still in its early stages, it remains unclear what China ultimately will build on these expanded outposts. However, China has stated publicly that the outposts will have a military component to them, and will also be used for maritime search and rescue, disaster prevention and mitigation, marine scientific research, meteorological observation, ecological environment conservation, navigation safety, and fishery production. At the reclamation sites currently in the infrastructure phase of development, China has excavated deep channels and built new berthing areas to allow access for larger ships to the outposts. China is also completing construction of an airstrip at Fiery Cross Reef, joining the other claimants with outposts – Malaysia, Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam – that have an airstrip on at least one of their occupied features, and may be building additional ones.

Though other claimants have reclaimed land on disputed features in the South China Sea, China's latest efforts are substantively different from previous efforts both in scope and effect. The infrastructure China appears to be building would enable it to establish a more robust power projection presence into the South China Sea. Its latest land reclamation and construction will also allow it to berth deeper draft ships at outposts; expand its law enforcement and naval presence farther south into the South China Sea; and potentially operate aircraft – possibly as a divert airstrip for carrier-based aircraft – that could enable China to conduct sustained operations with aircraft carriers in the area. Ongoing island reclamation activity will also support MLEs' ability to sustain longer deployments in the South China Sea. Potentially higher-end military upgrades on these features would be a further destabilizing step. By undertaking these actions, China is unilaterally altering the physical status quo in the region, thereby complicating diplomatic initiatives that could lower tensions.

[4] Dispute Resolution

Despite the recent destabilizing actions in maritime Asia, claimants have engaged in some positive steps. The Department of Defense believes that peaceful resolution of maritime disputes is essential, and many countries are using, and abiding by, the various available international legal mechanisms. India and Bangladesh reached agreement over their dispute in the Bay of Bengal, and some claimants in the South China Sea have used the International Court of Justice, ad hoc arbitral tribunals under the Law of the Sea Convention, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), to resolve their maritime and territorial disputes. For example, Malaysia and Singapore used the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 2008 to resolve a land and maritime dispute over offshore islands and rocks. Claimants have concluded a number of bilateral maritime boundary delimitation agreements as well, including in 2014, when the Philippines and Indonesia reached bilateral agreement on overlapping EEZs in the Mindanao, Celebes, and Philippine Seas.

In January 2013, the Philippines requested that an arbitral tribunal set up under the Law of the Sea Convention address a number of legal issues arising with respect to the interpretation and application of the Convention. The arbitration, among other things, seeks to clarify maritime entitlements of certain South China Sea features under the Convention and to determine whether China's Nine-Dash Line claim is consistent with the Convention. China's Foreign Ministry publicly rejected the submission and has refused to participate. In June of 2015, the arbitral tribunal held a hearing on the question of jurisdiction. Should it rule that the case may proceed on grounds of jurisdiction and admissibility, the arbitral tribunal will proceed to determine the merits of the Philippines' claims. How China responds to a potential ruling from the arbitral tribunal will reflect China's attitude toward international maritime law.



MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE U.S. OBJECTIVES



MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE U.S. OBJECTIVES

Many of the aforementioned issues have the potential to place the hard-won stability of the Asia-Pacific region at risk. Continued territorial and maritime disputes, combined with rapid military modernization, have led to the development of a more contested and potentially risky maritime environment. Although many states are pursuing efforts to reduce risk and resolve their disputes peacefully, the potential for miscalculation and instability remains high. Accordingly, U.S. allies and partners are seeking U.S. leadership and engagement. The Department is not standing still in light of these challenges, and is enhancing our efforts to safeguard the freedom of the seas, deter conflict and coercion, and promote adherence to international law and standards.

The Department of Defense, in concert with our interagency partners, therefore is employing a comprehensive maritime security strategy focused on four lines of effort: strengthening U.S. military capabilities in the maritime domain; building the maritime capacity of our allies and partners; leveraging military diplomacy to reduce risk and build transparency; and, strengthening the development of an open and effective regional security architecture.

DoD LINES OF EFFORT

First, we are strengthening our military capacity to ensure the United States can successfully deter conflict and respond decisively when needed. The Department is investing in new cutting-edge capabilities, deploying our finest maritime capabilities forward, and distributing these capabilities more widely across the region. The effort also involves enhancing our force posture and persistent presence in the region, which will allow us to maintain a higher pace of training, transits, and operations. The United States will continue to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international law, as U.S. forces do all around the world.



The Department will continue to fly, sail, and operate wherever international law allows.

Second, we are working together with our allies and partners from Northeast Asia to the Indian Ocean to build their maritime capacity. We are building greater interoperability, updating our combined exercises, developing more integrated operations, and cooperatively developing partner maritime domain awareness and maritime security capabilities, which will ensure a strong collective capacity to employ our maritime capabilities most effectively.

Third, we are leveraging military diplomacy to build greater transparency, reduce the risk of miscalculation or conflict, and promote shared maritime rules of the road. This includes our bilateral efforts with China as well as multilateral initiatives to develop stronger regional crisis management mechanisms. Beyond our engagements with regional counterparts, we also continue to encourage countries to develop confidence-building measures with each other and to pursue diplomatic efforts to resolve disputed claims.

Finally, we are working to strengthen regional security institutions and encourage the development of an open and effective regional security architecture. Many of the most prevalent maritime challenges we face require a coordinated multilateral response. As such, the Department is enhancing our engagement in ASEAN-based institutions such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), as well as through wider forums like the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) and Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), which provide platforms for candid and transparent discussion of maritime concerns.

[1] Enhancing U.S. Military Capacity in Maritime Asia

Investments and Capabilities

For decades, the United States has stood with its allies and partners to help maintain peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. During this period, the U.S. military has enjoyed and depended upon the ability to project power and maintain freedom of action in the maritime domain. Increasingly, we see countries developing new technologies that appear designed to counter these advantages. The Department is therefore working to maintain the necessary capabilities to deter conflict and reassure allies and partners, while protecting our ability to respond decisively if required. This includes investing in new capabilities and concepts that will allow U.S. forces to operate freely even in contested environments.



We are increasing the size, frequency, and sophistication of our regional exercises.

The Department is enhancing U.S. capabilities to project power from the sea, in the air, and under the water. As part of this effort, we are deploying some of our most advanced surface ships to the region, including replacing the aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* in 2015 with the newer *USS Ronald Reagan*; sending our newest air operations-oriented amphibious assault ship, the *USS America*, to the region by 2020; deploying two additional Aegis-capable destroyers to Japan; and home-porting all three of our newest class of stealth destroyers, the DDG-1000, with the Pacific fleet. We are complementing these surface capabilities with some of our most capable air assets, including F-22s, continuous deployments of B-2 and B-52 strategic bombers, additional tilt rotor aircraft for the Marine Corps and Special Forces, and, in 2017, the first forward-stationing of F-35s to Iwakuni, Japan. The Department will also procure 395 F-35 aircraft over the next several years, many of which will be deployed to the Asia-Pacific region. For the subsurface environment, the Department is basing an additional attack submarine in Guam and funding two additional Virginia

class submarines and the Virginia Payload Module, a compartment added to our new attack submarines that will increase dramatically their capacity to carry weapons and other payloads. These capabilities will help protect and add versatility to our advantages at sea, in the air, and under the water.

In support of these assets, the Department is investing in a comprehensive weapons modernization program, including plans for new or updated land-, sea-, and air-launched missiles relevant to the maritime domain. DoD is procuring advanced precision munitions that will allow our forces to strike adversaries from greater stand-off distances, like the new extended-range Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM-ER), and a new long-range anti-ship cruise missile that will improve the ability of U.S. aircraft to engage surface combatants in defended airspace. And we are finding new ways to use existing weapons systems, including by enhancing the capabilities resident in our current inventory of Tomahawk cruise missiles.

In addition to enhancing our power projection capabilities, the Department is investing in flexible capabilities that will allow us to respond more rapidly and effectively to a wider range of potential maritime challenges. The rotational deployment of Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) in Singapore provides the U.S. Navy with a flexible, nimble asset that can operate effectively in the region's challenging littoral waters. The Department is currently conducting the second proof-of-concept deployment of the LCS to the region, a deployment that will not only include port calls and engagements with seven different Southeast Asian States, but also participation in one of our largest and most complex war-fighting exercises in the Republic of Korea (ROK), Foal Eagle. Additionally, we will deploy the Mobile Landing Platform (MLP) to the region, which will more effectively enable a range of missions, from counter-piracy efforts to special forces operations and disaster relief missions.

Finally, the Department of Defense is investing in critical enabling capabilities, including persistent, deep-look ISR platforms that will provide us with greater situational awareness and early warning of potential crises in the maritime domain. The U.S. Navy is procuring 24 E-2D Hawkeye carrier-based airborne early warning and control aircraft, and as stated in the President's most recent budget submission, investing \$9.9 billion over the next four years to procure

the final 47 P-8A Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, many of which will be deployed to the Asia-Pacific region. The Department is also making substantial investments to develop the MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial system, which will provide broad area situational awareness to our operational commanders. The first deployment of MQ-4Cs will arrive in the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR) in FY 2017.



Our forward presence not only serves to deter regional conflict and coercion, it also allows us to respond rapidly to maritime crises.

These enhanced capabilities are already making a difference in improving the Department's ability to respond to humanitarian crises in maritime Asia. In March 2011, when an earthquake and tsunami devastated parts of Japan and damaged the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station, the U.S. military was able to deploy state-of-the-art maritime capabilities, including the aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan* and Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to assess the damage. Similarly, when Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 disappeared in March 2014, the U.S. Navy dispatched a newly arrived P-8A Poseidon aircraft along with a P-3C Orion aircraft to search for the missing plane. The P-8A's transit speed to the search area was so much higher and its expected fuel burn so much lower, a second P-8A was added to the search in place of the P-3C, allowing for more time spent actively searching. And in December 2014, when AirAsia flight 8501 crashed into the Java Sea, the U.S. Navy was able to quickly dispatch the LCS *USS Fort Worth* quickly to help search for the wreckage.

Over the longer-term, the Department of Defense is also developing a suite of innovative ideas and capabilities – known as the third offset – to advance U.S. military dominance in the 21st century and ensure the United States can deter adversaries and prevail in conflict, including in maritime Asia. To offset advances in anti-access and area-denial (A2/AD) weapons that we see proliferating in maritime Asia and beyond, the Department will identify, develop, and field breakthroughs in cutting-edge technologies and systems – especially in the fields of robotics, autonomous systems, miniaturization, big data, and additive manufacturing, and will draw these together in innovative operational and organizational constructs to ensure freedom of access for United States' forces in a contested A2/AD environment.

Force Posture

One of the most important efforts the Department of Defense has underway is to enhance our forward presence by bringing our finest capabilities, assets, and people to the Asia-Pacific region. The U.S. military presence has underwritten security and stability in the Asia-Pacific region for more than 60 years. Our forward presence not only serves to deter regional conflict and coercion, it also allows us to respond rapidly to maritime crises. Working in concert with regional allies and partners enables us to respond more effectively to these crises.

The United States maintains 368,000 military personnel in the Asia-Pacific region, of which approximately 97,000 are west of the International Date Line. Over the next five years, the U.S. Navy will increase the number of ships assigned to Pacific Fleet outside of U.S. territory by approximately 30 percent, greatly improving our ability to maintain a more regular and persistent maritime presence in the Pacific. And by 2020, 60 percent of naval and overseas air assets will be home-ported in the Pacific region. The Department will also enhance Marine Corps presence by developing a more distributed and sustainable laydown model.

Enhancing our forward presence also involves using existing assets in new ways, across the entire region, with an emphasis on operational flexibility and maximizing the value of U.S. assets despite the tyranny of distance. This is why the Department is working to develop a more distributed, resilient, and sustainable posture. As part of this effort, the United States will maintain its presence in Northeast Asia, while enhancing defense posture across the Western Pacific, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean.

The cornerstone of our forward presence will continue to be our presence in Japan, where the United States maintains approximately 50,000 military personnel, including the U.S. Navy Seventh Fleet and the only forward-stationed Carrier Strike Group in the world, as well as U.S. Marine Corps III Marine Expeditionary Force and significant Air Force assets. DoD is working more closely than ever with our Japanese allies, forward progress that will accelerate in future years under the new revised defense guidelines. In an effort to ensure that this presence is sustainable, we have worked with Japan to develop a new laydown for the U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific. As a result, the Department of Defense will be able to shift its concentrated presence on Okinawa toward a more distributed model that includes



The Department of Defense is enhancing its defense posture across the Western Pacific, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean.

Australia, Hawaii, Guam, and mainland Japan. As part of this program, the Department will develop new training ranges in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to enhance the readiness of our forward forces to respond to regional crises. The footprint associated with this laydown will support the arrival of next-generation capabilities and joint training and readiness in the USPACOM AOR.

Through the bilateral Force Posture Agreement (FPA) with Australia and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the Philippines, the Department will be able to increase our routine and persistent rotational presence in Southeast Asia for expanded training with regional partners. In Australia, the FPA will enable full implementation of the rotational presence for training and access for the U.S. Air Force and a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) of up to 2,500 Marines. Additionally, the Department is on track to achieve its stated goal of simultaneous rotation of 4 Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) through Singapore by 2017, which will provide the first persistent U.S. naval presence in Southeast Asia in more than 20 years.

DoD is also modernizing our maritime presence in Guam, as part of our efforts to develop Guam into a strategic hub for our joint military presence in the region. This includes forward-stationing a fourth attack submarine to Guam this year and deploying the Joint High Speed Vessel by 2018, while making investments in the resilience of the infrastructure supporting these capabilities. Guam is the regional hub for Air Force's Global Hawk fleet and the Navy will operate the MQ-4C Triton unmanned aerial reconnaissance vehicle from Andersen Air Base by 2017. The Air Force continues a program to modernize hangars and other support structures to augment those and other U.S. military capabilities.

Operations, Exercises, and Training

These efforts to enhance our force posture and presence allow the Department to maintain a higher tempo of routine and persistent maritime presence activities. U.S. Pacific Command maintains a robust shaping presence in and around the South China Sea, with activities ranging from training and exercises with allies and partners to port calls to Freedom of Navigation Operations and other routine operations. They are central to our efforts to dissuade conflict or coercion, preserve the freedom of the seas and our access to the region, encourage peaceful resolution of maritime disputes and adherence to the rule of law, and to strengthen our relationships with partners and allies.

As part of the Department's routine presence activities, the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force, and U.S. Coast Guard conduct Freedom of Navigation operations. These operational activities serve to protect the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea and airspace guaranteed to all nations in international law by challenging the full range of excessive maritime claims asserted by some coastal States in the region. The importance of these operations cannot be overstated. Numerous countries across the Asia-Pacific region assert excessive maritime claims that, if left

unchallenged, could restrict the freedom of the seas. These excessive claims include, for example, improperly-drawn straight baselines, improper restrictions on the right of warships to conduct innocent passage through the territorial seas of other States, and the freedom to conduct military activities within the EEZs of other States. Added together, EEZs in the USPACOM region constitute 38 percent of the world's oceans. If these excessive maritime claims were left unchallenged, they could restrict the ability of the United States and other countries to conduct routine military operations or exercises in more than one-third of the world's oceans.

Over the past two years, the Department has undertaken an effort to reinvigorate our Freedom of Navigation program, in concert with the Department of State, to ensure that we regularly and consistently challenge excessive maritime claims. For example, in 2013, the Department challenged 19 excessive maritime claims around the world. In 2014, the Department challenged 35 excessive claims – an 84 percent increase. Among those 35 excessive maritime claims challenged in 2014, 19 are located in U.S. Pacific Command's geographic area of responsibility, and this robust Freedom of Navigation program will continue through 2015 and beyond.

The Department is also pursuing a robust slate of training exercises and engagements with our allies and partners that will allow us to explore new areas of practical bilateral and multilateral maritime security cooperation, build the necessary interoperability to execute multilateral operations, and promote regional trust and transparency. We are increasing the size, frequency, and sophistication of our regional exercise program, with a particular focus on developing new exercises with Southeast Asian partners and expanding our multilateral exercise program. We have also begun incorporating a maritime focus into many of these engagements in order to tailor our training to address regional partners' evolving requirements.

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In Northeast Asia, the Department conducts several regular maritime exercises with Japan and South Korea focusing on enhancing our combined capabilities to counter provocations and manage the changing Northeast Asian security environment. Though its original purpose was to counter special operations forces, the annual bilateral Key Resolve/Foal Eagle exercise with the ROK now includes amphibious operations and anti-submarine warfare in recognition of the importance of the maritime domain in defending South Korea. Similarly, the U.S.-Japan Shin Kame anti-submarine warfare exercise is designed to improve how U.S. and Japanese forces counter diesel submarines, a concern in the region.

In Southeast Asia, the Department is honing an already robust bilateral exercise program with our treaty ally, the Republic of the Philippines, to assist it with establishing a minimum credible defense more effectively. We are conducting more than 400 planned events with the Philippines in 2015, including our premier joint exercise, Balikatan, which this year was the largest and most sophisticated ever. During this year's Balikatan, more than 15,000 U.S., Philippine, and Australian military personnel exercised operations involving a territorial defense scenario in the Sulu Sea, with personnel from Japan observing.

We are also expanding our maritime engagements with partners like Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam. In Indonesia, the April 2015 iteration of the Sea Surveillance Exercises (SEASURVEX) included a flight portion over the South China Sea for the first time, and this past spring, our navies concluded their first tabletop Simulated Submarine Casualty Exercise (SMASHEX). We also established a new joint exercise with Malaysia, which is scheduled to occur for the first time in 2015, and in 2014, the Marine Corps participated in an amphibious exercise with the Malaysian Armed Forces, during which our forces trained side-by-side in eastern Sabah. In Vietnam, we are rapidly growing our

maritime training, having recently concluded our sixth-annual Naval Engagement Activity (NEA) in March 2015, a historic five-day engagement that included a full day of at-sea operations. In just six years, our naval cooperation with Vietnam has grown from a simple port visit to multi-day engagements that allow our sailors to develop a better understanding of each other's operations and procedures.

The Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise, hosted since 1971, is the largest international military exercise in the world. The 2014 iteration was the largest on record, with participation from 22 nations, including 49 surface ships, 6 submarines, more than 200 aircraft, and 25,000 personnel in and around the Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The exercise's objectives are to enhance the interoperability of the combined RIMPAC forces as well as to integrate new participants in the employment of multinational command and control at the tactical and operational levels.

In 2014, China participated for the first time in RIMPAC, though at a limited level, and the Department has invited China to portions of the 2016 exercise, at a level similar to its 2014 participation. As the largest naval exercise in the world, RIMPAC provides an opportunity for the United States, China, and countries throughout the Asia-Pacific region to exercise key operational practices and procedures that are essential to ensuring that tactical misunderstandings do not escalate into crises.

[2] Building Ally and Partner Capacity

Given the growing array of challenges the United States and our allies face in the maritime domain, one of the Department's top priorities is to enhance the maritime security capacity of our allies and partners, both to respond to threats within their own territories as well as to provide maritime security more broadly across the region. The Department is not only focused on providing enhanced capabilities, but also on helping our partners develop the necessary infrastructure and logistical support, strengthen institutions, and enhance practical skills to develop sustainable and capable maritime forces. The Department is particularly focused on helping our partners enhance their maritime domain awareness and establish a common maritime operating picture that would facilitate more timely and effective regional responses to maritime challenges.



The Department is particularly focused on helping our partners enhance their maritime domain awareness and establish a common maritime operating picture.

In Northeast Asia, the Department of Defense is working closely with Japan to augment its already extremely capable maritime forces. The United States and Japan recently announced new Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, which will enable the U.S. Armed Forces and the Self-Defense Forces to work more closely together to support peace and security, including in the maritime domain. Our expanded bilateral cooperation will now encompass a wide range of activities from peacetime cooperation on shared maritime domain awareness up to cooperation in a contingency.

We are also working together with Japan to improve the maritime-related capabilities of the JSDF, which is especially salient given the new Guidelines for U.S.-Japan Defense Cooperation. The United States is augmenting Japan's amphibious capabilities for island defense, including through sales of AAVs and V-22 Ospreys. Through the sale of E-2D Hawkeyes and Global Hawk Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, Japan is improving its ability to monitor the maritime domain and airspace around the country, an issue of particular importance given the large increase in Chinese and Russian air and naval activity in the area, including continuing Chinese incursions in the vicinity of the Senkaku Islands.

In Southeast Asia, the Department's first priority is working together with our allies and partners to develop the most effective mix of capabilities to provide credible maritime defenses and patrol capabilities. At the Shangri-La Dialogue on May 30, 2015, Secretary Carter announced the Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative, a new effort to work together with our allies and partners in Southeast Asia to build greater regional capacity to address a range of maritime challenges.

The Southeast Asia Maritime Security Initiative is a new effort to build greater regional capacity to address a range of maritime challenges.

As part of this initiative, DoD, in coordination with the Department of State, will consult with our allies and partners to ascertain their needs and requirements more effectively and to explore new opportunities for maritime collaboration. In particular, we are focused on several lines of effort: working with partners to expand regional maritime domain awareness capabilities, with an effort to work towards a regional common operating picture; providing the necessary infrastructure, logistics support, and operational procedures to enable more effective maritime response operations; further strengthening partner nation operational capabilities and resilience by deepening and

expanding bilateral and regional maritime exercises and engagements; helping partners strengthen their maritime institutions, governance, and personnel training; and identifying modernization or new system requirements for critical maritime security capabilities. To support this initiative, the Department is working to maximize and rebalance Title 10 security cooperation resources to prioritize the Southeast Asia region more effectively.

Even before this initiative, and in conjunction with the Department of State and the U.S. Coast Guard, we have dramatically expanded our maritime security assistance in recent years. In the Philippines, the Department is providing coastal radar systems and assisting the Department of State with naval maintenance capacity building as well as providing interdiction vessels, naval fleet upgrades, communications equipment, and aircraft procurement. We are helping Vietnam bolster its maritime ISR and command and control within their maritime agencies, and we are working with Malaysia to build maritime law enforcement training capacity and interagency coordination to help improve their maritime domain awareness. The Department also is working with Indonesia to increase its patrol capacity, ISR integration, and maintenance capability. In 2015, we established new bilateral working groups with both Indonesia and Vietnam to help clarify their maritime defense requirements.

Select DoD Maritime Capacity Building Efforts in Southeast Asia

	Initiative	Authority	Timeframe
Indonesia	Ministry of Defense Technical Expert.	Section 1081 Ministry of Defense Advisor Program (MoDA)	Arrived March 2015
	Integrated Maritime Surveillance System (IMSS): 18 coastal surveillance stations, 11 ship-based radars, 2 regional and 2 fleet command centers (\$51M) Note: FMF provided sustainment and integration in following years.	Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2006, as amended (Section 1206)	Funded FY2006-2008 Delivered 2011
	Reform of defense planning, defense strategy, and budget development and execution system and processes.	Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI)	2013 to present
	Upgrade TNI Bell helicopters and Navy Special Forces Equipment, including 12 RHIBs (\$27M).	Section 1206	2010 funding, RHIBs delivered 2012
Malaysia	Integrated Maritime Surveillance System: 8 coastal surveillance radar stations, 28 small boats and associated maritime interdiction training, Joint Regional Command Center (\$42M).	Section 1206	Funded FY2007, 2008, 2011 Delivered 2010-2011
Philippines	National Coast Watch Center (\$19M).	Cooperative Threat Reduction Program	2013-2017
	Coast Watch Radar System.	Section 1206	
	Reform of defense planning system.	DIRI	2005-2012
Vietnam	Provision of WMD detection equipment; improved communications; construct coast guard training center; maritime security workshops (\$21M).	Cooperative Threat Reduction Program	FY2014-2015
	Law enforcement, advisory, and boat maintenance training (\$405K).	Counternarcotics and Global Threats Authority	FY2014-2015

An additional priority for the Department is helping our partners develop the institutional structures and procedures necessary to manage their growing maritime forces effectively. This includes establishing unified maritime agencies, such as the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA), as well as developing standard training protocols and procedures for maritime personnel. For example, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) is helping to construct a Philippine National Coast Watch Center in Manila that will assist the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in assuming increased responsibility for enhancing information sharing and interagency coordination in maritime security operations. Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam are similarly improving their maritime capabilities.

One of the Department's top priorities is to promote greater maritime domain awareness, which is an essential capability for all coastal States. Given the size of the Asian maritime domain, no coastal State can provide effective maritime domain awareness on its own. This is why DoD is working closely with partners in the Asia-Pacific region to encourage greater information sharing and the establishment of a regional maritime domain awareness network that could provide a common operating picture and real-time dissemination of data. Singapore has been a leading partner in this effort. Together, we have established the Singapore Maritime Information-Sharing Working Group, an ideal platform to share best practices and lessons learned from recent regional maritime activities and explore options for increased information sharing across partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region. The near-term iterations of the working group will be bilateral and then expand to include other regional partners to participate in this community of interest. The United States and Singapore also are working together to support Singapore's development of the Information Fusion Center (IFC) into an interagency information-sharing hub for the region.

A key element of DoD's approach to maritime security in Southeast Asia is to work alongside capable regional partners. There is broad regional agreement on the importance of maritime security and maritime domain awareness, and we're working closely with our friends in Australia, Japan, South Korea, and elsewhere to coordinate and amplify our efforts toward promoting peace, stability, and prosperity in Asia. In part, we are partnering trilaterally to achieve these goals. In November 2014, President Obama, Prime Minister Abe, and Prime Minister Abbott hosted their first trilateral meeting and agreed to expand maritime cooperation, trilateral exercises, and defense development. The Department is working with these two allies in a coordinated fashion to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of our maritime security capacity building efforts in Southeast Asia, beginning with the Philippines.

The Department sees a strategic convergence between India's "Act East" policy and the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region.

In South Asia, the Department sees a strategic convergence between India's "Act East" policy and the U.S. rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, and we are seeking to reinforce India's maritime capabilities as a net provider of security in the Indian Ocean region and beyond. Given our broad shared interests in maritime security, the Department has developed a three-pronged approach to maritime cooperation with India: maintaining a shared vision on maritime security issues; upgrading the bilateral maritime security partnership; and collaborating to both build regional partner capacity and improve regional maritime domain awareness.

First, the United States and India's shared vision for maritime security in the region is reflected in the January 2015 U.S.-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region. India and the United States affirmed the importance of safeguarding maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the region, especially in the South China Sea. This Joint Strategic Vision and the September 2014 U.S.-India Joint Statement also called on all parties to abide by international law, including the Law of the Sea Convention, to resolve maritime disputes and to avoid the use, or threat of use, of force.

Second, the Department of Defense and the Indian Ministry of Defence are upgrading their bilateral maritime security partnership, through growing bilateral exchanges between military personnel and by engaging in military exercises. Recent visits to India by then-Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet Admiral Harry Harris and Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus have highlighted the importance of naval engagement to the overall defense relationship. To bolster operational maritime cooperation, India has participated in the RIMPAC multilateral exercise, and the two sides conduct the annual flagship naval exercise MALABAR. Since 2007, the JMSDF also have participated when the

exercise has taken place off of the Japanese coast and near Guam. The exercise has grown in complexity and improved participating countries' abilities to operate together in a collaborative environment, and the Department is supportive of including other partners on a regular basis, hoping to see the return of previous partners in future iterations of the exercise. The Department is also actively working to support the Indian Navy through the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI). The two sides agreed to enhance maritime technology cooperation, in part, by forming a working group to explore aircraft carrier technology sharing and design.

Finally, both the United States and India are active in building regional partner capacity and maritime domain awareness (MDA) in the region. Both countries are contributing to these goals individually with other partners, and are mutually contributing to counter-piracy efforts in the Indian Ocean. The Department will continue to seek opportunities to consult with Indian counterparts about these efforts where possible. By doing so, the two countries will bolster the shared vision laid out by their respective governments and contribute to overall peace and security in the region.

[3] Reducing Risk

In addition to building maritime capabilities of allies and partners to deter and address regional threats, the Department is actively seeking to mitigate risk in maritime Asia. The Department is pursuing a two-pronged approach to achieve this objective, one focusing on our bilateral relationship with China, and the other addressing region-wide risk reduction measures. The combination of these two approaches will reduce the likelihood of miscalculation and conflict, which would have a detrimental effect on the United States and the region.

China

China's rise as a political, economic, and military actor is a defining characteristic of the 21st century; and we have a broad, complex relationship that has both elements of cooperation and competition. As a result, our defense engagement strategy considers both elements. The Department pursues an objectives-based military-to-military relationship with China that seeks to deepen cooperation in areas of mutual interest and to manage security competition and friction in a way that supports overall stability. To reach these objectives, DoD pursues a defense relationship with China based on three pillars and related efforts.

First, DoD pursues sustained and substantive dialogue through policy and senior leader engagement to develop common views on the international security environment and related challenges. Second, we are attempting to build concrete, practical areas to develop the capacity to cooperate in areas of shared interest. Lastly, DoD is enhancing risk reduction measures through focused activities that seek to improve operational safety and to develop and institutionalize modalities



(such as the Defense Telephone Link) that can reduce the potential for accidents or miscalculations that could derail the overall bilateral relationship.

In our bilateral discussions, we continue to express to China our concerns about its behavior in the East and South China Seas, including restricting access to fishing grounds in disputed waters, engaging in provocative energy exploration in other nations' claimed exclusive economic zones, undertaking dramatic land reclamation activities on disputed features, and unilaterally announcing an ADIZ in the East China Sea. China's actions are having the effect of increasing uncertainty about its intentions, and this is shrinking space for diplomatic solutions to emerge. We therefore continue to urge China to take active steps to build trust with its neighbors, including clarifying the scope and nature of its maritime claims in accordance with the international law of the sea and committing reciprocally to halt land reclamation, construction of new facilities, and further militarization of outposts it occupies if other claimants similarly commit themselves to do so.

Activities in the U.S.-China military-to-military relationship, conducted in accordance with National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2000, section 1201 and other relevant laws, contribute to maritime stability through the promotion of broad-based acceptance and application of international law and standards. Since 2012, the military-to-military relationship has experienced positive momentum marked by a strengthening of the capacity to cooperate and assist in areas of international shared interest, and an increased, shared attention to risk management and risk reduction, particularly in the maritime domain. In this time, there has been a reinvigoration of existing risk reduction mechanisms, such as the Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), and the establishment of new mechanisms such as the Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters initiative and the Notification of Major Military Activities initiative.

The MMCA, signed in 1998, is an agreement between the Department of Defense and the PRC Ministry of National Defense that establishes a consultation mechanism on maritime safety issues. Though it experienced difficulties in its early years, it now has been bolstered by a mutual commitment to invest in the mechanism, resulting in productive and constructive talks on a range of operational safety issues to include those associated with search and rescue, counter piracy, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

In 2014, then-Secretary Hagel and his Chinese counterpart signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Rules of Behavior for Safety of Air and Maritime Encounters. The MOU established a common understanding of operational procedures for when air and maritime vessels meet at sea, drawing from and reinforcing existing international law and standards and managing risk by reducing the possibility of misunderstanding and misperception between the militaries of the United States and China. To date, this MOU includes an annex for ship-to-ship encounters. To augment this MOU, the Department of Defense has prioritized developing an annex on air-to-air encounters by the end of 2015. Upon the conclusion of this final annex, bilateral consultations under the Rules of Behavior MOU will be facilitated under the existing MMCA forum.

Other outcomes of military-to-military engagement as they pertain to maritime stability include: regularized bridge-to-bridge communications between naval vessels; standardized use of the Western Pacific Naval Symposium's CUFS by PLAN vessels; and greater cooperation and coordination in Gulf of Aden counter piracy operations, including attendance at Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) meetings.

Region-Wide Measures

Reaching agreement on bilateral risk reduction measures with China is necessary, but not sufficient. The Department is also focused in the near term on encouraging the development of practical risk reduction and confidence-building mechanisms across the entire Asia-Pacific maritime domain.

The Department marked a significant milestone in this effort in April 2014 when member navies at the WPNS adopted the CUES in Qingdao, China. The CUES provides standardized navigation and communication protocols for use when ships and aircraft meet at sea, including a standardized set of language-independent communication protocols to allow for communication between navies absent a common language.

The Department continues to seek regular opportunities for practical application of these protocols. In July 2014, a U.S. Navy vessel was able to use CUES for the first time during an unplanned encounter with the PLAN. It has since been used many times. Going forward, the Department is also exploring options to expand the use of CUES to include regional law enforcement vessels and Coast Guards. Given the growing use of maritime law enforcement vessels to enforce disputed maritime claims, expansion of CUES to MLE vessels would be an important step in reducing the risk of unintentional conflict.

We are also exploring a range of other risk reduction measures at both the bilateral and multilateral level, and actively supporting similar efforts by our allies and partners. For example, the Department is working to help ASEAN and other regional partners establish operational-level hotlines to establish more reliable and routine crisis communication mechanisms that help lower the risk of potential miscalculation or conflict.

In the East China Sea, China and Japan are exploring hotlines between the PLAN and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF). The Department supports Japan's call for better diplomacy and crisis management procedures in the East China Sea, and we encourage both Japan and China to implement their bilateral maritime liaison mechanism. Japan and Taiwan have also taken positive steps towards reducing tensions by signing a fisheries agreement in 2013 that formally outlines the rights for each claimant's fishing fleets around the Senkaku Islands, and the Philippines and Taiwan similarly have pursued a fisheries agreement.

In the South China Sea, Indonesia and Malaysia recently announced their intention to exchange maritime envoys in an effort to increase mutual transparency. Similarly, a number of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) claimants are actively considering the establishment of bilateral hotlines in the South China Sea to help provide clear channels of communication in the event of inadvertent crises.

The U.S. Government urges States to not implement unilateral actions that undermine regional stability and trust. In November 2013, China announced the creation of an ADIZ in the East China Sea with coverage that overlapped the Senkaku Islands and Japanese, South Korean, and Taiwan ADIZ, and that China professed to apply even to aircraft not intending to enter Chinese national airspace. The uncoordinated way in which China announced an ADIZ over the East China Sea, including over territory administered by other countries, was not conducive to fostering positive and peaceful relations in maritime Asia. The United States has been clear that this type of action is destabilizing. The United States does not recognize China's declared ADIZ, and it will not change how the United States conducts military operations in the region. The United States has consistently conveyed to Chinese authorities that any new ADIZ over other disputed areas such as the South China Sea would be destabilizing and would be of deep concern to the United States and to its regional neighbors.

The peaceful resolution of maritime disputes is essential, and many countries are using, and abiding by, the various available international legal mechanisms.

Taken together, these efforts to encourage the development of practical confidence-building and risk reduction measures will help prevent maritime incidents and better manage them when they do occur.

[4] Building Regional Architecture and Supporting Rule of Law

As tensions in Asia rise and the security situation becomes more complex, there is a growing need for credible, capable regional institutions that provide forums for frank discussion on difficult issues, facilitate practical multilateral security cooperation, and build trust.

Engagement with regional institutions such as the East Asia Summit, ARF, and particularly the ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) provide the Department an opportunity to take active steps to highlight the importance of peaceful resolution of disputes and emphasize the need for adherence to international rules and standards. Within these venues, the Department is candid with regional counterparts in raising our concerns about excessive maritime claims and the means through which they pursue them and their territorial claims. We also consistently raise the importance of exercising restraint, building trust and transparency, and behaving responsibly at sea and in the air.

ASEAN is an increasingly important DoD partner, and the Department is working to bolster its engagement with and support of ASEAN's efforts to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. DoD actively supports the ADMM-Plus Experts Working Group (EWG) on Maritime Security, which seeks to facilitate information sharing, establish best practices, and build standard maritime operating procedures among participating nations in order to reinforce norms of behavior and reduce the risk of conflict. For example, at the May 2015 Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, the Secretary of Defense announced DoD's commitment to deploy a technical advisor in support of ASEAN's maritime security efforts. In addition, the ADMM-Plus EWG on Maritime Security held a field training



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exercise in 2013, and it is planning to conduct a combined maritime security-counterterrorism field training exercise next year. We also provide support to a range of complementary organizations such as the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum, the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, and the Western Pacific Naval Symposium. For example, the USPACOM Amphibious Leaders Symposium (PALS), held for the first time in May 2015, brought together 23 Pacific Partner Nations to collaborate on regional amphibious capability development and the cooperative use of amphibious forces in disaster operations.

We are also leveraging informal opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation, such as the first U.S.-ASEAN Defense Forum then-Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel hosted in Hawaii in April 2014. This dialogue provided an informal opportunity for candid discussion with our ASEAN counterparts about shared challenges in the maritime

domain and the need for greater information sharing among ASEAN States. Following these discussions, U.S. Pacific Command hosted a follow-on workshop in May 2015 to discuss possible models of information sharing and opportunities for greater maritime collaboration among the United States and ASEAN countries. Participants from all ASEAN member countries recognized the significant threats that are now present in maritime Southeast Asia and identified the need not only to pursue a framework that enhances maritime domain awareness – which would greatly bolster their ability to tackle those threats – but also to share information between and among countries in the region.

Finally, the Department fully supports countries pursuing multilateral agreements and arrangements to enhance security in maritime Asia. In 2002, ASEAN and China signed the DoC in an attempt to lower tensions in the region. Although the DoC is not legally binding, the Department of Defense continues to support ongoing efforts to implement the DoC, and for ASEAN and China to reach agreement on a meaningful CoC as part of a multifaceted approach to lower tensions and prolong peace and stability in the region.



MARITIME SECURITY STRATEGY TO ACHIEVE U.S. OBJECTIVES



CONCLUSION

The Department is working to stay ahead of the evolving maritime security environment in the Asia-Pacific region in order to ensure continued freedom of the seas, deter conflict and coercion, and promote adherence to international law and standards. From the Indian Ocean to Northeast Asia, we are strengthening our military capability to promote stability and respond decisively to threats; enabling our network of allies and partners to address challenges in the maritime areas of the region; leveraging military diplomacy to promote trust, stability, and standards of behavior; and bolstering the ability of regional organizations to address shared maritime security concerns.



The Department is focused on ensuring that maritime Asia remains open, free, and secure in the decades ahead.

